

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, September 8, 2003**

Present: June Bailey, Dennis Brunner*, Glen Dey, Bobbie Harris

Absent: Bob Aldrich, Colleen Craig, Janet Miller

Also Present: Debra Foster and Bill Cather – GreenWay Alliance; Betty Pulliam and Cheryl Miller – American Gold Star Mothers, Inc; Kathy Dittmer - Riverside Citizens Association (RCA); Sharon Fearey – Wichita City Council; Ed Martin – Public Works Department; Jamsheed Mehta and Nalini Johnson - Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department; Mike North – Law Department; and Doug Kupper, Bob Gress, and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:35 p.m. Because there was no quorum, it was suggested that informational items be taken up first on the agenda.

1. **Discussion of the South Arkansas River Greenway.** Presented by Debra Foster and Bill Cather, GreenWay Alliance. Ms. Foster began the presentation by explaining that the Wichita Park Alliance and Greenways Commission organizations had merged to form the GreenWay Alliance (GWA). She said the GWA was a park advocacy group; that they had 501©(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service; and that they would be looking for grant opportunities to support park projects.

Ms. Foster stated that the GWA was interested in development of the South Arkansas River Greenway (SARG) and that they had been involved with the City's initial decision to purchase the parcel for park purposes. She said several other groups were interested in development of the area including the Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Kansas Canoe Association, Project Beauty, Medical Auxiliary and others.

Mr. Cather commented that the neighbors surrounding the park were concerned about the area being turned into a dump. He said he has attended several meetings with the neighborhood to assure them that the area was being programmed for park and recreation purposes. He said GWA was concerned that the Park Board and Park Department not make any long-range commitments that may prevent future development of the area. He mentioned the Kansas Canoe Association's use of the SARG for several canoe launches and how the area was ideal for that purpose. He commented on the uniqueness of the greenway, partially because of its location at the confluence of the Big Arkansas River and Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Project (Big Ditch), which he said has some of the cleanest water in Sedgwick County. He also expressed concern regarding maintenance of the flood control dikes in the area and mentioned how illegal use of the area by four-wheel drive vehicles was affecting those structures.

Ms. Foster mentioned previous instances where the City has sold parkland or has received proposals to use parkland for questionable purposes. She said the GWA would like to work with the City and

Park Board to protect parkland. She concluded by saying that the GWA wanted to let the Park Board know that they were there and that they were interested in assisting with development of the SARG.

President Bailey asked when the GWA met. Mr. Cather responded that the GWA meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 12:00 noon in this same park conference room. Staff indicated that they would provide board members a copy of the GWA meeting schedule. President Bailey commented that the Board was encouraged at the last meeting when the archery group stepped forward with their proposal for use of the SARG. Ms. Foster explained that the GWA did not necessarily disagree with the archery proposal; however, it may preclude other opportunities for use of the area.

President Bailey stated that the Board would let the GWA know of future park projects that may require their assistance. Mr. Cather concluded by thanking the Park Board for protecting parkland.

2. **Kansas Wildlife Exhibit**. Presented by Ed Martin, Public Works Department. Mr. Martin referred board members to a map of the area surrounding the present Kansas Wildlife Exhibit located in Central Riverside Park.

Councilwoman Sharon Fearey commented that she is working with a task force that is looking at ways to generate funds to pay the utilities and salary for the animal handler at the exhibit. She said the Riverside Citizens Association and Wilson, Darnell and Mann have been asked to develop some fund raising ideas. She said one idea being explored was selling memorial bricks at the exhibit. Martin referred board members to an area east of the animal cage that could be expanded and that also provided easy access. He briefly reviewed the map referring board members to the grass strip, approximately four feet wide between the animal cage and the sidewalk. He said the strip could ultimately enclose three sides of the cage. He said there was also discussion concerning installation of an engraved stone or sign that would explain the purpose of the bricks.

*Dennis Brunner present.

Director Kupper mentioned that donations should be made payable to the GreenWay Alliance. President Bailey asked how much the group was trying to raise? Councilwoman Fearey commented that the sky was the limit. She said the project is in the early planning stages and that the task force also intended to work with River Festival to sponsor an event to market the project. Glen Dey asked about vandalism and on-going maintenance expenses. Bob Gress explained that currently there was an alarm system (infrared beam) around the animal cages that set off an alarm if broken. It was further noted that funds raised for the project should also provide for maintenance costs.

Councilwoman Fearey concluded by saying that the task force was citywide, not just Riverside residents, and that they were not only exploring ways to raise money to ensure that the exhibit continued, but that they were also looking at ways to expand the exhibit.

On motion by Dey, second by Harris, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to recommend approval of the concept as presented and that the final plan be brought back to the Board for review.

3. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 11, 2003, were reviewed and approved as modified.

4. **Proposed Memorial – Veterans Memorial Park.** Presented by Betty Pulliam, State President and Executive Board Member, Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Mrs. Pulliam gave a brief history and origin of the organization, which she said consisted of women whose children have died in military service. She commented that the Wichita Chapter was chartered on March 10, 1950. She referred board members to a picture of the proposed memorial along with a copy of the organization's fund raising letter. She said the organization has raised the \$2,500 needed for the purchase and installation of the proposed memorial. President Bailey asked where the group wanted the memorial placed.

Director Kupper explained that the proposal would have to be reviewed by the Design/Review Board because all memorial sites originally identified in the plan for the park have been taken.

On motion by Brunner, second by Dey, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to accept the memorial subject to working out a placement location with staff.

5. **Mid-Town Railroad Corridor.** Presented by Jamsheed Mehta and Nalini Johnson, Wichita-Sedgwick County Area Planning Department. Elaine Johnson referred board members to an aerial of the abandoned Union Pacific Railroad corridor, which ran through Wichita mid-town. She reviewed a color code system that identified the following areas: City right-of-way; privately owned areas that reverted back to previous ownership after the railroad was abandoned that were not for sale; areas that were for sale; parks and greenways; proposed bike path; and schools.

Johnson explained that the corridor concept has been approved for funding by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) on a 70-30% matching grant. She added that the City has programmed the 30% matching funds for the project into the 2005 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). She said there was also approximately \$76,000 available for land acquisition in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies. She commented that Phase II of the project would include examination of soil and ground water samples along the proposed corridor due to the location of a gas station at Eleventh Street.

President Bailey asked about the length of the corridor. Johnson replied that the completed corridor would be approximately one and one-half miles long. Bobbie Harris asked why the project was initiated? Director Kupper commented that it was a way to incorporate green space into the downtown/urban area. Jamsheed Mehta commented that the Planning Department was developing a plan to rezone the area moving away from industrial uses and more towards residential use.

Bobbie Harris commented that a walking path/corridor would promote physical fitness. She mentioned Canada's nationwide trail system and how different towns have taken ownership of the trail through their area in terms of upkeep and maintenance. Glen Dey mentioned that the corridor also tied into the K-96 bike path.

There was general discussion concerning East – West bike path connections; the possibility of including a connecting path in the Twenty First Street industrial/business development; adding a path along the ditch in the industrial corridor; and a path connecting to Grove Park.

6. **Director's Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following items:

- **Playground Review Committee.** Reported that \$480,000 in CDBG monies has been allocated for playground renovation and that the committee was evaluating the latest bid documents. He

commented on safety surfacing and other items. President Bailey requested that board members be furnished a copy of the current Park CIP. She commented on the playground improvement equity issue. What improvements/renovations were made to which playgrounds based on various requests for proposals. Responding to a question from Bobbie Harris, there was brief discussion concerning installation of playground equipment.

- Housing and Urban Development Survey. Provided board members a copy of a survey being used to update the Consolidated Plan and requested that they complete the survey and return it to the Park Department by September 30.
- Junior Football Program. Reported that the Junior Football Program kicked off last weekend. Also commented on the possibility of lighting the fields at Grove and Planeview Parks.
- CIP. Commented on the northeast baseball complex, land acquisition, and the indoor tennis facility.
- Saturday Park Tour. President Bailey requested that staff schedule a Saturday tour for new board members. Director Kupper commented that staff would schedule a tour in Spring.
- Cell Towers. Verified that the Board still wanted to review requests to locate cell towers on parkland on a case-by-case basis. Bobbie Harris commented that the City Council had the final decision. There was general discussion concerning disposition of funds for leasing land for cell towers. President Bailey clarified that funds were deposited into the general fund. Responding to a question from Harris, Director Kupper commented that because many of the athletic fields have light poles, they are a desirable location for “stealth” cell towers. Both Brunner and Harris agreed with the process of the Park Board reviewing and making a recommendation to the City Council on each request to locate a cell tower on parkland.
- Pump Station. Reported that he had received two phone calls concerning the pump station at Riverside Park.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:05 p.m.

June Bailey, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary